

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2023

Statement on the 25th Anniversary of the Death of Matthew Shepard
October 12, 2023

Twenty-five years ago today, Matthew Shepard lost his life to a brutal act of hate and violence that shocked our Nation and the world. The week prior, Matthew had been viciously attacked in a horrific antigay hate crime and left to die, simply for being himself.

Matthew's tragic and senseless murder shook the conscience of the American people. And his courageous parents, Judy and Dennis Shepard, turned Matthew's memory into a movement, galvanizing millions of people to combat the scourge of anti-LGBTQI+ hate and violence in America.

As Vice President, I had the honor of helping to enact the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, which extended Federal hate crimes laws to cover sexual orientation, gender identity, and disability. This legislation is a lasting tribute to Matthew, a testament to the relentless advocacy of Judy and Dennis, and an important step forward for our country. I was proud to honor Judy and Dennis as "Uniters"—Americans who stand against hate and heal our divides—at the United We Stand Summit here at the White House last year. Our charge is to continue the fight against hate, against violence, and against bigotry in all its forms.

Today, as threats and violence targeting the LGBTQI+ community continue to rise, our work is far from finished. No American should face hate or violence for who they are or who they love. I once again call on Congress to send the Equality Act to my desk so that we can ensure LGBTQI+ Americans have full civil rights protections under our laws, because every American is worthy of dignity, acceptance, and respect.

God bless Judy, Dennis, and all those who are grieving and remembering Matthew today.

Categories: Statements by the President : Matthew Shephard, 25th anniversary of death.

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